THE FUTURE OF CONSTANTINOPLE

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THE FUTURE OF CONSTANTINOPLE

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If Nature did not take delight in blood,
She would have made more easie waies to good.

LORD BROOKE.

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The Future of Constantinople

CHAPTER I

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

CONSTANTINOPLE and the narrow straits upon which it stands have occasioned the world more trouble, have cost humanity more in blood and suffering during the last five hundred years, than any other single spot upon the earth. Certainly during the last hundred years it has been the chief European centre of international unrest. From it, and about it, have radiated continually international rivalries and hatreds and suspicions. It was the direct origin and cause of a large number of the wars fought in the nineteenth century. It is not improbable that when

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Europe in her last ditch has fought the last battle of the Great War, we shall find that what we have again been fighting about is really Constantinople. And when the last ditch has been filled in to form the last grave for the victims of this war, we want to know that the question of Constantinople in international politics has, so far as human wisdom and foresight can make it possible, been finally settled, so that it will no longer be the breeding-ground of hatred and covetousness and war. The object of this book is to analyse the causes of the position of this city, in the past, as a fomenter of international unrest, to examine and to suggest proposals for a settlement which may finally remove those causes.

There are, as we shall see, only two ways in which an international settlement of Constantinople can be effected at the end of this war. It can be settled on

national and imperialist lines, or it can be settled on international lines. These two methods are as different from one another as is competition from co-operation: they represent two different schools of international policy and two different ideals. Under the first method, that of nationalism and imperialism, Constantinople must be placed under the domination of a single State, to be used by that State exclusively in its own interests, either as a menace to other nations and their interests, or as a defence against the menace of other nations. That, in fact, has been the position in which the world has been content to place Constantinople since 1453. It is on these lines that for the last hundred years Europe has approached the question of its settlement. It has been dominated for nearly five centuries by an alien power which is also alien to Europe. As the centre of Ottoman Imperialism it has been used to

oppress at least five European subject races. For many years it was used as a menace to the interests and independence of the Germanic races: and during the last hundred years it has been used in the same way as a perpetual menace to the interests of Russia. But even that is not the end of the story, for, meanwhile, it has been the object of imperialist covetousness of nearly all the Great Powers of Europe. It has formed a lure to the imperialistic and nationalist ambitions first of France, then of Russia, and lastly of Austria and Germany. And hence it has naturally also been a bogey, perpetually haunting the nightmares of British imperial dreams.

This is not a record which twentieth-century civilization, diplomacy, and statesmanship can contemplate with pride or satisfaction. And above all, no Englishman can avoid a feeling of deep uneasiness when he reflects that the graves

before Sevastopol must always stand as a mockery of the graves on Gallipoli. None of the Great Powers of Europe can contemplate the recent history of Constantinople with satisfaction. The whole sorry story of wrong-headed diplomacy, of national aggression, suspicion, treachery, trickery, fear, blood and iron, and war, is directly due to the fact that Europe has never conceived or attempted the settlement of Constantinople on anything but the lines of a narrow nationalism and a rigid imperialism. It is, however, a curious fact that, despite the enormous power and velocity which imperialistic nationalism acquired in the last century, there grew up side by side with it a new kind of internationalism. This internationalism, though it is the antithesis of aggressive imperialism, is very different from the earlier pacificism. It is eminently practical, for it was developed and fostered by diplomatists and statesmen to

meet the actual requirements of existing international relations and everyday life. It sprang from the wonderful discovery that national interests are often promoted better by international co-operation than by international competition. It was found that in many departments of national and international life the individual interests of each State, and of its inhabitants, gained enormously by common action and the setting up of a common system of international government. Rarely has any great difficulty been experienced in devising means of applying this principle in practice. The result was that during the last century an immense number of international relations were subjected by diplomatists to a system of real international government. In another book[1] I have shown in considerable detail how widely and successfully international legislation and administration have been

[1] *International Government*, by L. S. Woolf. George Allen and Unwin.

adopted, often unconsciously, by statesmen who are pre-eminently practical men, to solve problems involving the most vital political and economic national interests, and how this process has necessitated the evolution of new organs of international government. The very success of these experiments has served to cover them with obscurity, and the ordinary man who knows so much about irreconcilable national interests and the embittered noisiness of international competition, hears nothing of the many solid triumphs of international co-operation.

The alternative to an imperialist settlement of Constantinople is that it should be internationalized. The proposal has already been made by Sir Edwin Pears and others. A political proposal can only be supported or discredited by an appeal to experience and to reason. I propose, therefore, in these pages to examine the probable effects of a settlement of Con-

stantinople upon international as opposed to narrowly national and imperialist lines, and to consider in some detail whether our experience of international government throws any light upon the practical possibility of applying it to that city in place of the exclusive domination of a single State.

The prima facie arguments for internationalizing, if possible, Constantinople and a strip of land on both sides of the Bosphorus, Sea of Marmora, and Dardanelles are very strong. The city itself is not national but international, "a city not of one nation, but of many, and hardly more of one than of another." The Turks entered Constantinople as alien conquerors, and though they have been there now for 464 years "with their Zaptiehs and their Mudirs, their Bimbashis and their Yusbashis, their Kaimakans and their Pashas," they remain nothing but alien conquerors. Constantinople to-day is not

a Turkish but a cosmopolitan city. Only 44 per cent. of the population are Moslems, and, as Mr. Arnold Toynbee has pointed out, if the Turkish seat of government moved or were removed from it to Asia Minor, most of the Turks would move with it. Another fifty per cent. of the population is composed in almost equal proportions of Greeks, Armenians, and "foreigners." The problem here is therefore complicated so far as population is concerned, not as in the Balkans, Alsace, Poland, and Bohemia, by nationalism, but by cosmopolitanism. And if a national autonomous government is prima facie the solution of the problem of territory where the population is predominantly and consciously national, then it may be fairly argued that prima facie the solution of the problem of a cosmopolitan area is international government.

But there are other facts which point to the desirability of internationalizing this

area, if it be practicable. We have seen that the area has from its population no "national" importance. Constantinople derives its importance from two and only two distinct causes, its strategical position and its political-economic position. Its strategical importance depends upon the use which can be made of its geographical position whether for defence or offence in time of war; its political-economic importance results from the effects of that position in time of peace. The question of the effect of a proposed settlement of Constantinople upon strategy in time of war is distinct, and must be kept distinct, from the question of its effect in time of peace. Both questions must be considered, but considered separately. It is not uncommon to find publicists writing as though the only importance of Constantinople were its strategical position. But the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus continue to exist in times of peace, though many people forget

them ; and if a form of government, whether national or international, has to be set up there, the effect and effectiveness of its operation in times of peace have to be considered no less than in times of war. I propose to deal with the problem first from the point of view of the politics of peace, and then from that of strategy and war.

Now the whole importance of Constantinople in peace comes from the fact that it stands upon, and to some extent dominates, a great highway of commercial traffic. It has no other intrinsic economic or political importance. The area itself is small, unproductive, and unfertile. It does not itself serve as an outlet for any larger and productive hinterland, for Eastern Rumelia finds its natural outlet in Dedeagatch. The total value of the exports and imports was estimated in 1901 not to amount to more than £T11,000,000. The foreign trade of this area is therefore

rather less than that of Trinidad, so that it is no exaggeration to say that for the purposes of Weltpolitik its intrinsic economic and productive importance is negligible. A world at peace is concerned with Constantinople in one way, and one way only. The narrow waters upon which it stands connect the Black Sea with the Mediterranean, and form, therefore, one of the most important highways of commerce and trade upon the earth. These waters are for trade and shipping nothing but a great navigable river, and Constantinople, for all its mosques and Bimbashis and the visionary web of Machtpolitik which has been woven about it, is nothing but a port of passage upon the river's banks. Now it is almost exactly one hundred years since the world recognized, and publicly proclaimed, that it has one great international interest in such navigable rivers. At the Congress of Vienna the principle of freedom of navigation

upon rivers was first laid down, and since that day the right of way for shipping and commerce upon practically all the great rivers of Europe and other continents has been placed under international guarantee, or even, as we shall see, under international administration. The reasons which determined this principle and policy, as being in the interest not of one nation but of all nations, can hardly be better enunciated than in the words in which President Wilson restated them as a principle of future international settlement: "So far as practicable, moreover, every great people now struggling towards a full development of its resources and of its powers should be assured a direct outlet to the great highways of the sea." It has gradually become recognized and established that the interests of all peoples demand that the "great highways of the sea" shall in peace be free and open to the commerce of all, and further

that no one nation, merely because its territory stands about one of the direct outlets to the sea, should be allowed to prevent or impede its free use by other nations. Hence freedom of navigation upon the Rhine, Danube, Scheldt, Meuse, Elbe, Oder, Pruth, Dniester, Niemen, Vistula, Guadiana, Tagus, Douro, St. Lawrence, Amazon, Rio Grande, Rio de la Plata, and Congo has since 1814 been assured either by international government or by international guarantee. And it may be remarked that President Wilson went on to lay down a further principle which logically follows from this one, already firmly established in international law. "Where this (the assurance of a right of way to the sea) cannot be done by the cession of territory," he said, "it no doubt can be done by the neutralization of direct rights of way under the general guarantee which will assure the peace itself. With a right comity of arrange-

ment no nation need be shut away from free access to the open paths of the world's commerce."

How do these principles affect the position of Constantinople in international politics? It stands upon a great "navigable river," a great outlet to the sea, the natural and only navigable passage for commerce between the rest of the world and the countries of the Danube, Russia, and a large part of Asia. Twelve thousand ships a year are said to pass through the Dardanelles, and that is the only fact about Constantinople which makes it worth the thoughts of a single European statesman in times of peace. If the Turks be removed from Constantinople —and even the shade of Disraeli agrees to-day, we imagine, that it is time that he went, "bag and baggage" — every nation of Europe has one and the same interest, other than the strategical, in it, namely, that navigation and commerce in

the Bosphorus, Sea of Marmora, and Dardanelles shall be absolutely free and unimpeded. In fact, if there is any place where the neutralization of a direct right of way and the internationalization of a direct outlet to the sea are desirable in the interests of all nations, that place is Constantinople.

But in international affairs not everything which is desirable is also practicable. The internationalization of these narrow waters would require that a narrow strip of land on each side of them, and including Constantinople, should be subjected to international government and the administration of an international organ of government. It must be repeated that this would be in the interests, except in war, of all parties if it were possible. The countries most directly affected by the question of the ownership of the Straits are Russia, Austria-Hungary, Roumania, the Balkans, and, to a less extent, Germany.

The control of Constantinople by any one of these States is at least a possibility of practical politics. But it is inconceivable that the world would tolerate the interference of any one of those States under any circumstances with the free navigation in the Straits in peace. Thus, except in war, we see again, this area has no intrinsic value of any sort, whether to Russia or to Germany, Roumania or Austria. It has only one value for all of them, and that is as a free highway for commerce. And what is true for Russia and Germany, is still more true for remoter countries like Britain and America. Constantinople, therefore, an international city, embodies for the world one single international interest, and it is desirable from every point of view that the city and the interest should not be "given" to the exclusive control of a single alien State, but should be administered and protected by a common inter-

national government. It remains to consider whether such international government and administration are practicable.

The answer which will be given immediately on general grounds by many people, particularly some able and experienced administrators, will be a decided negative. International administration, it will be said, has already been proved to be a Utopian failure by our experience in Egypt. This judgment is largely based and will be supported by a famous and rather Pecksniffian chapter in Lord Cromer's *Modern Egypt*, and it is necessary, therefore, to examine its arguments and statements with some care. The chapter is entitled "Internationalism," and the gist of it is to suggest that "administrative internationalism" has been tried to a greater extent in Egypt than anywhere else, that it necessarily fails because it leads to administrative impotence, and that it is necessarily little more than a Utopian

dream. Now, the suggestion that the experiment of administrative internationalism has been chiefly confined to Egypt is contrary to facts. International administration has been applied in its most complete form to the control of river traffic and the freedom of navigation of rivers in the European Commission of the Danube, to postal and telegraphic communications in the Universal Postal Union and the Telegraphic and Radiotelegraphic Unions, to railway communications through the International Conventions for the Transport of Merchandise by Railways and for the Unité technique des Chemins de fer, for sanitation and the prevention of epidemic diseases in the International Sanitary Councils, for the prevention of the slave trade and the control of the liquor traffic in Africa through the Bureau International Maritime de Zanzibar.[1]

[1] Vide *International Government*, Part II. ch. iii. pp. 113–168.

These organs of government have been in existence and operation for ten, twenty, thirty, or even forty years; in efficiency they compare favourably with similar Government departments and administrative organs of independent national States, and for vigorousness and effectiveness need not fear comparison with 99 per cent. of the organs of local government in this country. Before any one condemns the suggestion of international administration for Constantinople on the ground that it has been proved to be impotent and utopian in Egypt, he must first study its operation and achievements in all the places, departments of life, and organs of government mentioned above.

But, further, it is not even correct to say that international administration was really ever tried in Egypt. Lord Cromer's experience was confined to the following governmental organs: the Commission of the Public Debt, the Railway Administra-

tion, and the administration of the Daira and Domains lands. The main charges of incompetence and impotence which he brings against these Commissions and Boards were due not to their internationalism, but to defects inherent in the administrative system of Egypt precisely because it was neither international nor national. Take, for instance, the case of the Commission of the Public Debt. A system of joint control over Egyptian finance of the most elaborate and complicated nature was set up between the Egyptian Government, which was national, and the Commission, which was international. The system resulted in what Lord Cromer rightly calls financial labyrinths; but he has no right to go on to argue that these labyrinths are "a typical instance of the results of international administration." There are no such labyrinths in the Danube Commission, the Conseil sanitaire, maritime, et quarantenaire d'Égypte, or even the Conseil de

la Dette in Turkey, all international administrative organs which control considerable financial operations. No administration, national or international, could work successfully if constructed on the complicated system of the Egyptian finances, but those complications were due no more to the internationalism of the Commission than to the non-internationalism of the Egyptian Government. In Egypt the administration of a cosmopolitan organ was superimposed upon the administration of British officials, which was itself superimposed upon the government of a native ruler. That is not international government, but the worst kind of divided responsibility and control. Even in Lord Cromer's own account it becomes clear that his real charge against the Egyptian system was that it was one of joint control, in which administration always was liable to degenerate into nothing but a three-cornered struggle for

power between the cosmopolitan commissions, the British administrators, and the Egyptian Government. For instance, after admitting that the "Egyptian authorities have always preferred dealing with the Commission of the Debt to dealing with the Powers," he goes on to make the following significant remark: "The only purpose which this institution eventually served was to act as an obstacle to progress, and occasionally as an agency for the manifestation of hostility towards England." Again, when he comes to deal with the International Board which was constituted to administer the Railways, the Telegraphs, and the Port of Alexandria, he attributes its inefficiency to the fact that "obviously the management should have been vested in one person," and he continues: "but internationalism abhors the one-man system as much as Nature abhors a vacuum. The sheet-anchor of internationalism is, indeed, that several

men should be set to do the work of one." But this, as I shall presently show, has not been the experience or has interfered with the efficiency of an international administration like that of the Danube Commission. Lord Cromer's own account points to the real root of the evils in Egypt. They sprang, not from the fact that several men were set to do the work of one, but from the fact that several men, some representing national and others international bodies, were set to do the same administrative work without their functions being clearly defined. It was a mixture of national and international administration in a field where the most acute national rivalries were flourishing. Lord Cromer let the national cat out of the international bag when he wrote: "They (the Egyptian railways) would have benefited still more had the British reformers been from the first allowed a free hand in dealing with their

administration." That sentence alone would dispose of the idea that international administration in any real form was ever set up or ever given a fair trial in Egypt.[1]

The possibility of international administration at the Dardanelles must be judged from the experience of other experiments than those upon the banks of the Nile. The problem which the nations of Europe, or rather of the world, ought to consider is whether it is possible to set up a stable administration which will be international and will administer Constantinople, the Straits, and a narrow strip of territory

[1] Lord Milner in *England and Egypt* asks: "Is not the veto of the Powers on the legislative authority of the Egyptian Government Internationalism? Are not the mischievous restrictions on her financial freedom Internationalism? And was not Egypt in an ideal state of Internationalism at the time when the representatives of all the Powers were vainly vying with one another to restrain Ismail Pasha in his wild career along the road to ruin?" The answer, three times, is in the negative.

on either side of them. The main function of that administration will in times of peace be to maintain law and order and sanitation in Constantinople, but, above all, to maintain free navigation in, and police and control, the Straits. The answer to the question whether such a system of international government could be set up with any probability of success must be sought in the past. We must turn to the history of similar experiments and try to read their lessons. There have been several experiments in international administration in which many of the elements of the Constantinople problem were involved, but none approaches it more nearly, in its largest and its smallest aspects, than that of the internationalization of the great highway of the Danube. The history of that experiment in international government is little known, for it is safely buried in official documents and the portentous volumes in which in-

dustrious foreigners have collected international treaties. I propose, therefore, to go into the details of the history at some length, in order to show what light it throws upon the practicability of assuring at Constantinople President Wilson's international "neutralization of a direct right of way under a guarantee."

The world's chief interests in Constantinople and the Straits are, we have seen, economic, and can be defined in five words as freedom of access for commerce. It was a consciousness of precisely the same interests upon the Danube which led to the events now to be described. The world's interests in freedom of access to the Danube were found to be incompatible with a rigid national administration; gradually but inevitably they issued in the growth of an international form of administration, which, by reason of its superior efficiency, superseded the national. In a valuable book, *Docu-*

ments relatifs à la Liberté de Navigation du Danube, by M. Sturdza, there is a map of the Danube before the Treaty of Paris of 1856, in which the different sections of the river are coloured in different colours, according to the national administrations exercising sovereignty over each. From the source to the mouth there are no less than six different sections, showing that the river was subject to six independent administrations. In some places the different colours overlap where two administrations faced each other on the opposite banks. Here were obvious circumstances in which facts and experience showed that independent national administration far outdid in complication and inefficiency even the grossest ineptitudes which Lord Cromer erroneously thought to be confined to administrative internationalism. The six separate national administrations proved their incompetence to safeguard the international interest,

freedom of navigation, in two ways. That freedom could be obstructed in two ways, naturally and artificially, by the hand of God causing shoals and shallows and sandbanks and siltings, etc., and by the hand of man imposing shipping taxes and dues and other restrictions. Nationalism failed to stay the hand of God, and actually encouraged the hand of man, to make the river inaccessible to commerce. And the reason is obvious. If the national administration at Galatz allowed the river to become unnavigable, it was useless for another national administration, higher up at the Iron Gates, to keep it in first-class order for shipping. Or, again, if one national administration chose to exercise its sovereignty over its particular section of the river by imposing prohibitive dues or restrictions, that section became a bar to freedom of navigation both from above and below.

The actual results of this administrative

nationalism, as applied to this great highway of commerce, may best be shown by two quotations which describe the condition of the mouth of the Danube just before the creation of the International European Commission. They are both to be found in reports of British representatives on that Commission presented to the Foreign Office. Sir John Stokes, Britain's first representative and the leading spirit during the earliest and most difficult portion of the international experiment in 1871, thus described "the condition of the river and its embouchure at Sulina, when the Commission held its first sitting on November 4, 1856"[1]:—

Half a mile seaward of the mouth of the Sulina branch, the only navigable entry to the Danube, a shoal or bar extended across the channel, reducing its depth at times to 8 feet, and never giving more than 11, the usual depth being about 9 feet. This bar was a quarter of a

[1] Report on the improvements made in the navigation of the Danube since 1856 [C.—467].

mile in length between the deep water of the river and that of the sea; the channel through it was narrow and varying in direction. Numerous wrecks strewed the entrance and helped to consolidate and extend the bar.

The interior of the river was hardly any better than the mouth. Its course was obstructed by numerous shoals, which for many months in the year had even less water upon them than the bar at the mouth. To pass over the river shoals, vessels which have taken cargo at Galatz and Ibraila had to lighten, and large accumulations of them used to occur at difficult points, to the great delay and detriment of all. But the river shoals had this advantage over the bar, that vessels could by an occasional rise of water pass over them without lightening, and, when obliged to lighten, were not exposed to actual danger or delay from the sea, whereas at the mouth it frequently happened that vessels were delayed for weeks waiting for fine weather to pass over the bar after having lightened, and, whilst taking back their cargo outside, were liable to be caught by a gale, which they must then ride out in the roads.

On such occasions, which were of frequent occurrence, a vessel incurred great risk from the shifting of her half-stowed cargo, the grain itself often got damaged, and frequently the half-

empty lighters, obliged to run back into port, were wrecked on the bar.

Such were the physical difficulties with which the navigation had to contend; the moral ones were hardly less fatal to the interests of trade.

The pilots were few, and in league with the rogues of every class who, in one way or another, plundered the vessels trading to the Danube. They ran vessels aground, in order to oblige the latter to employ lighters, in whose profits they shared, and whilst acting as interpreters and agents for the captains in making terms with the lightermen, arranged most exorbitant rates, which the captains in their distress were obliged to consent to. Moreover, in addition to the extortion thus practised, the lightermen robbed the vessels they lightened of the grain by the use of false bottoms to their holds, by sending away during the night the grain they received during the day, and by other devices which now happily belong to the past.

Over and above these evils, the navigation suffered from the entire absence of regulations or order, and thus collisions and accidents of all kinds were frequent, and, in the utterly lawless state of things which prevailed in 1856, acts of piracy and intentional loss of vessels were not rare occurrences.

Another contemporary witness, Sir Charles Hartley, describes the condition of the mouth of the Danube in those days as follows:—

In 1856 the entrance to the Sulina branch was a wild, open, sea-board, strewed with wrecks, the hulls and masts of which sticking out of the submerged sandbanks gave to mariners the only guide where the deepest channel was to be found, while the banks of the river near its mouth were only indicated by clusters of wretched hovels built on piles, and by narrow patches of sand skirted by tall reeds, the only vegetable product of the vast swamps beyond.[1]

I have quoted these descriptions in full to show what kind of a problem it was which confronted the Powers assembled in conference at Paris in 1856, so far as concerned the opening of this potentially most important commercial river route. It

[1] Quoted in despatch reporting upon the operations of the European Commission of the Danube during the Years 1894–1907. Commercial. No. 9 (1907) [Cd. 3646].

was not the pet scheme of some cranky internationalist to be applied in some backwater of national life. The most vital national, political, and economic interests were involved, and the diplomatists were forced into taking action by the chaos which the existing conditions were causing among those interests. A system of independent national administrations had utterly broken down, incompetent to deal with the modern world of shipping and international trade. To the eyes of the practical men sitting in conference at Paris, the problem presented itself in this form: first there was the necessity for establishing by agreement the principle of freedom of commerce, freedom from hampering and prohibitive dues and imposts of individual States along the whole course of the river; secondly, it was necessary to set up some form of administration which would keep at least the mouth of the river open for navigation, which would be

capable of putting down the lawless disorder prevailing, and which would regulate navigation and control and police the highway of the river.

It is most interesting and throws great light upon the question of Constantinople to see how these practical men first proposed to deal with the two parts of this problem, and how time has dealt with and remoulded their proposals, for time and facts work upon human proposals and contrivances with the ceaseless and remorseless action of wind and rain upon the rocks. In order to attain the first object, freedom from interference with the right of way by the administrative action of individual States, they laid down and established under international guarantee what may be called "the principle of free trade and the open door on highways of international communication." And that they were fully conscious of the significance of this principle is shown by

their reference to its first application to international river communications in the Treaty of Vienna, and by their explicit declaration that it should form part of the public law of Europe. This will best be seen from the words themselves of Article 15 of the Treaty of Paris, 1856, which are as follows :—

L'acte du Congrès de Vienne ayant établi les principes destinés a règler la navigation des fleuves qui séparent ou traversent plusieurs États, les Puissances contractantes stipulent entre elles qu'à l'avenir ces principes seront également appliqués au Danube et à ses embouchures Elles déclarent que cette disposition fait désormais partie du droit public de l'Europe et la prennent sous leur garantie.

La navigation du Danube ne pourra être assujettie à aucune entrave ni redevance qui ne serait pas expressément prévue par les stipulations contenues dans les articles suivants. En conséquence il ne sera perçu aucun péage basé uniquement sur le fait de la navigation du fleuve, ni aucun droit sur les marchandises qui se trouvent à bord des navires. Les réglements de police et de quarantaine à établir pour la

sûreté des États separés ou traversés par ce fleuve seront concus de manière à favoriser, autant que faire se pourra, la circulation des navires. Souf ces réglements, il ne sera apporté aucun obstacle, quel qu'il soit, à la libre navigation.

It will be seen that this clause guarantees a free right of way over the whole course of the Danube, and that in order to establish this the several States agreed to relinquish some of their sovereign rights over the sections of the river which traversed their territories. In future, navigation was to be subjected to no due or toll or other obstacle by any individual State unless such due or toll had been expressly provided for in the international treaty itself. But the diplomatists knew well that freedom for navigation could not be assured merely by guaranteeing a right-of-way exempt from administrative interference of riverain States. They knew that for the full accomplishment of this purpose it would be necessary to set up

an independent and uniform administration which would actively free the river from physical and legal impediments to commerce, and continue to maintain that freedom when established. The Treaty definitely states that it is with the object of realizing the dispositions of the fifteenth article that the Powers have agreed to set up the administration defined in the following four articles.

The administration to be set up by Articles 16-19 was to consist of two parts or organs: (1) The European Commission of the Danube, and (2) the Riverain Commission. The first was to be an organ of the most extreme and complete international government, for it was to consist of representatives of the seven signatory States, France, Austria, Great Britain, Prussia, Russia, Sardinia, and Turkey. I call it "extreme and complete" because only two States represented upon the Commission were riverain

States—i.e. had any direct interest in or rights over the territory over which the Commission was to have jurisdiction. The Riverain Commission, on the other hand, was to set up a kind of joint national rather than a completely international government, for it was to consist of delegates of the four riverain States, Austria, Bavaria, Turkey, and Würtemberg, and of "commissaires" of the three riverain principalities, Moldavia, Wallachia, and Serbia.

Not only was the constitution of these two Commissions very different in the Treaty of Paris, but their functions and duration, as contemplated by the makers of the Treaty, were also very different. It is important to notice this, because their subsequent history was the exact opposite of what was designed for them by their creators—a not uncommon experience of paternity—and this fact has a great bearing upon the problem of

international administration. The jurisdiction of the European Commission was, according to Article 16, to extend only from Isaktcha to the sea; it was to be appointed in order to execute one particular, definite task, namely, to remove the physical obstacles of sandbanks, shoals, etc., at the mouth of the river, and so render it navigable. To defray the expenses of this work and of its administration, the Commission was given the power of levying fixed shipping dues—the rate to be decided by a majority vote—provided that the vessels of all nations were to be treated on a footing of complete equality. The European Commission was to be only a temporary organ of government to complete a particular task, and Article 18 states that "it is understood that the European Commission will have completed its task . . . within the space of two years."

On the other hand, the Riverain Com-

mission was to be a permanent administrative body. Its jurisdiction was to extend, pending the completion of the work of the European Commission, from the source of the river to Isaktcha, and subsequently over the entire Danube. Its functions were four: (1) The preparation of regulations for navigation and a river police; (2) the removal of all obstacles, no matter what their nature, which may stand in the way of a complete application of the principle of freedom of navigation to the Danube; (3) the execution of the necessary works for maintaining the river throughout its course in a navigable condition; and (4) the maintenance of the navigability of the mouth of the Danube after the dissolution of the European Commission. Finally, Article 18 provides that, after the dissolution of the European Commission, all its powers shall devolve upon the Riverain Commission.

The history of these two organs of government during the next sixty years was, we have already said, very different from that which these provisions obviously looked for. The temporary European Commission became permanent, and instead of handing over its powers to the Riverain Commission, received many of the powers and much of the extended jurisdiction of the latter. All this came about naturally and quietly under the ceaseless pressure of everyday facts, almost without Europe and her diplomatists becoming aware of what was happening. In the first place, the permanent Riverain Commission never came into operation at all. Its main function was to apply the principle of freedom of navigation in practice, but it was unable to agree upon the methods by which it should be applied. And the very different history of its sister Commission leads one to the inevitable conclusion that this failure was due to the fact

that the Riverain Commission was not constituted on principles of a sound and complete internationalism. Like the Egyptian hybrid organs which misled Lord Cromer, from one point of view it attempted a compromise between nationalism and internationalism. In Egypt two States, England and France, had the most direct and immediate interests involved, and there was acute national feeling between them. The so-called international organs in Egypt really attempted only to give to these two States, through their representatives, some measure of joint control; and joint national control under such circumstances must be the worst and most dangerous form of government. So, too, on the Danube, it was the riverain States whose interests were most immediately involved, and which, by a stupid system of international rivalry and competition, had been led to exercise their sovereign rights

against the interests of one another, and therefore, as had ultimately been proved, against their own interests. But the worst way of endeavouring to unravel this international tangle was to set up, as in the Riverain Commission, merely a kind of *condominium*, or joint control, by the very States which felt themselves to be in a condition of exacerbated rivalry. Or, to put the matter in another way, the Riverain Commission was a system of administration and an organ of government which was intended to represent rival national interests, and therefore it inevitably came to grief; the European Commission was a system and organ of government and administration which represented, not rival national interests, but the vital international interests common to all the individual nations. The latter allowed the common permanent international interests to come to the surface and exercise their proper force: hence its success.

The precise steps by which the European Commission established a legal permanence and the Riverain Commission faded into final oblivion are not absolutely clear, because the diplomatists who were responsible for the changes were themselves not conscious of what was really happening and what they were doing. But by a series of conventions and treaties [1] the life of the European Commission was extended, its jurisdiction was enlarged, and most important administrative and police powers were given to it. The first step in this process was taken in 1865. In the nine intervening years the European Commission had already proved itself to be a most efficient and useful organ of administration. By important engineering works it had opened

[1] Among the more important of these are an Act signed at Galatz, 1866, Articles 4–7 of the Treaty of London, 1871; Articles 52–57 of the Treaty of Berlin, 1878; Act signed at Galatz, 1881; Treaty of London, 1883.

the Sulina branch at the mouth of the river to vessels of large draught; it had improved the course of this channel; removed dangerous wrecks; constructed a lighthouse; instituted a regular service of salvage; built a hospital at Sulina; and established a provisional system of regulation and control over the navigation between Isaktcha and the sea. These activities were, however, not strictly constitutional, for it had been clearly contemplated in the Treaty of 1856 that the powers delegated to the Commission should after two years be handed over to the Riverain Commission. Since the latter still remained in a state of suspended animation, it became necessary to make provision for the continued existence of the European Commission. A Convention was accordingly signed at Galatz in 1865. The signatory Powers declared that all the acts of the Commission had been in conformity with their intentions, and that

in the following treaty they proposed to define the rights and obligations which the new condition of affairs upon the Lower Danube had created. The twenty-two articles which follow transform the Commission into an organ of considerable administrative power. Its mandate for improving and maintaining the navigability of the Lower Danube is extended indefinitely. The territorial authorities are forbidden to construct or allow the construction of quays and other works of the same nature in the ports at the mouth of the river unless the plans have been approved by the Commission. The Commission is given the power to regulate and control and police the navigation on that part of the river within its jurisdiction, and for this purpose to make and publish general Regulations. These Regulations are given the force of law, not only for policing the river, but in civil cases decided in municipal courts The

policing of the river and the control of navigation are placed under the surveillance of two officers appointed by Turkey, who are to perform their duties under the orders of the Commission. The power to impose a tax on shipping in order to defray the expenses of administration is confirmed. The administration of the Commission, together with all its officers and works, are placed under a guarantee of neutrality.

The next step in the development of this international administration arose out of the territorial changes embodied in the Treaty of Berlin of 1878. Articles 52 to 57 of that Treaty are devoted to the control of navigation on the Danube. The newborn State of Roumania was given representation upon the Commission, and the Commission's jurisdiction was extended up to Galatz. All fortifications on the river from the Iron Gates to its mouth were to be removed, and no war-

ship was to be allowed in the river below the Iron Gates. Finally, it may be remarked that the Powers at Berlin seem to have at length definitely, for the first time, given up all hope of their Riverain Commission ever coming into operation.[1] A special mandate was given to Austria to undertake the removal of the obstacles to navigation at the Iron Gates, a work which originally would have been within the province of the Riverain Commission.

The Convention signed at Galatz in 1865 was not completely in accord with the new conditions which resulted from the Treaty of Berlin, and three years after the signature of the latter Treaty a new Convention was signed at Galatz, which placed the constitution and powers of the Commission on a wider and more con-

[1] In 1871 the Powers still had some faint hopes. Article 5 of the Treaty of London of that year states that the conditions of the reunion of the Riverian Commission shall be fixed by agreement between the riverian Powers.

sistent basis. By this Act all navigation and police officers were to be appointed as well as controlled by the Commission. The lighting of the river was placed under its administration, and in concert with a Sanitary Council at Bucharest it was entrusted with all the sanitary regulations. Provision is made for penalties for contravention of the Commission's regulations, and for the trial of cases of such contravention before the Inspector of Navigation and the Captain of the Port of Sulina. Appeals against the decisions and judgments of these officers must be accepted and tried by the Commission itself, sitting as a court.

The last important stage in the construction of this international administration is contained in the Treaty signed "in the name of All-powerful God" at London in 1883. The jurisdiction of the Commission was again extended, this time to Braila. Its powers were prolonged for

twenty-one years, and provision was made for their further automatic prolongation, subject to notification by a contracting Power of its intention to propose modification in the constitution of the Commission. Regulations for the navigation, for the policing, and for the control of the river between the Iron Gates and Braila, made by the Commission with the assistance of delegates of Serbia and Bulgaria, were adopted.

I have traced what may be called the constitutional history of the European Commission at some length, because it has great bearing upon the possibility of an international administration for the Straits and of the constitution which should be given to it. A constitution does not, however, always work out in the world of facts precisely in the form in which it appears on political or diplomatic paper. "Your Danube Commission," some one is certain to say, "looks very

pretty in these treaties, but what does it look like on the Danube?" I propose now to answer that question briefly.

The original object for which the international administration was set up, it will be remembered, was the removal of physical obstacles to navigation at the mouth of the river. The attainment of this object and the extension of the Commission's administration over the river to Braila have necessitated large and continuous engineering operations. Between 1857 and 1905 about £1,600,000 were spent on these engineering works. Sand-banks and shoals were removed; channels deepened and straightened; piers, quays, etc., constructed; lighthouses and buoys provided; and hospitals built. The mouth of the river, which had been for years nothing but a graveyard of wrecked ships, rapidly became a well-lighted and safe highway for shipping.

The first part of this work was com-

pleted in three periods. In the first, 1856-61, the river was surveyed and temporary works carried out for the improvement of the mouth and Sulina branch. By the end of this period the bar had been removed, there was a good navigable entry at the Sulina mouth, and deepening of the worst shoals had been begun. The channel had been buoyed, numerous wrecks had been removed, a lighthouse had been erected at Sulina, facilities for mooring, etc., had been provided in several places. The second period was from 1861-5, during which piers were strengthened, the worst shoals in the channel were improved, and a lighthouse built south of the St. George's mouth. In the third period, 1865-71, temporary works at the Sulina mouth were converted into permanent structures, the Sulina channel was deepened and straightened, offices were built, quays, etc., provided, and new buoys were laid.

As regards its legislative, administrative, and judicial functions, the Commission has elaborated a series of administrative Regulations, which have been altered and amended from time to time, for the police and control of navigation of the river. By 1861 the Commission had already framed provisional regulations for the control of navigation below Isaktcha, had established an efficient police superintendence below the same place, and had organized a complete pilot system and service for vessels navigating between Ibralia and the sea. At the same time it purchased a steamer for towing purposes, "and entering for a time into competition with the private enterprises of this nature, the Commission brought down the rates of towage, and thus conferred a benefit on the Danube trade, which has lasted ever since." Between 1861 and 1865 the Commission prepared and published the codified Regulations which took the

place of its provisional regulations, and it commenced the discharge of its duties as a Court of Appeal for the final judgment of offences against navigation rules. Since 1870 the General Regulations and Tariff have been several times revised, the pilotage, port, and police services have been strengthened and made more efficient, and the "procedure of the Court of Appeal" has been "regulated and fixed by precedents adopted for the different classes of cases." As a result, since 1883, the operation of administrative regulations has been extended from the mouth right up to the Iron Gates. These regulations are executed and enforced through an efficient service of international river police, with the result that the lawless extortion, piracy, and disorder of 1856 have given place to a civilized system of law and order.[1]

[1] The facts and quotation on these and the succeeding paragraphs are taken from the Foreign

The best proof of these statements may be found in the following description of the Danube, taken from a consular report which contrasts its condition in 1906 under the European Commission with its condition in 1856: it should also be read in the light of Sir John Stokes's and Sir Charles Hartley's picture of the state of the river in 1856, quoted above.

The minimum depth of water over what was once the Sulina bar now generally stands at 24 feet instead of 9; and the depth in the Sulina arm has a minimum of 20 feet instead of 8. All sharp bends and circuitous curves have been eliminated, with the result that the navigable depth of the stream between the St. George's Chatal and Sulina has been shortened by one-fourth of its length, i.e. from 45 to 34 miles. Sulina from being a collection of mere hovels, has developed into a town with 5,000 inhabitants; a well-found hospital has been established where all merchant sailors are en-

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Office Papers quoted above, and also (1) Commercial. No. 6 (1878) [C.—1976], (2) Commercial. No. 6 (1894) [C.—7502].

titled to receive gratuitous treatment, light-houses, life-saving services, buoys, flags, floating elevators, and efficient pilot and police services combine to make it a first-class port.

The material results of this efficient international administration are clearly shown in the statistics relating to shipping. "The number of shipwrecks," writes Sir Henry Trotter, "at the mouth of the river was in the old days appalling. One dark winter's night in 1855, during a terrific gale, 24 sailing ships and 60 lighters were driven ashore off the Sulina mouth, and upwards of 300 persons perished." From 1856 to 1860 the number of wrecks was 62, or 39 per 10,000 ships frequenting the river, whilst from 1861 to 1905, that is, since the entrance was deepened, improved, and controlled by the Commission, there were only 35 wrecks, or 4 per 10,000 ships. From 1847 to 1860 the average annual number of British ships entering the Danube was 205 of a mean capacity of

193 tons; from 1896 to 1905 the average number increased to 420 of a mean capacity of 1,769 tons. The export of cereals from Danube ports via Sulina, which in 1867 (the first year for which authentic records exist) was under 2½ million quarters, increased to an annual average of 12½ million quarters from 1893 to 1905.

The financial administration of the Commission has been no less successful and efficient. Since 1887 the Commission has been free from all liabilities in respect of loans and has possessed a reserve fund of £40,000. Its average revenue was roughly about £80,000, which was derived from taxes paid by shipping on leaving the river. All the expenses of engineering works and administration have been met from these taxes. Yet taxation under international government, unlike the experience of most national administrations, has steadily declined. The navigation dues

have been gradually reduced from 3·75 fr. and 2·80 fr. to 1·70 and 1·10 fr.

Such has been the history of the European Commission of the Danube. In its light we may now once more turn to examine the problems of Constantinople. The internationalization of that city and of the Straits would involve the setting up of an administration which would be capable of performing the following governmental functions. First and foremost it would have to maintain absolute freedom of commerce and navigation: it would have to maintain law and order within the Straits and upon the adjacent territory under its jurisdiction. It would have to provide for sanitation and public health. The power of making regulations of a legislative character for these objects would have to be given to it, and the power of levying taxes in order to meet the expenses of government and administration. A judicial system for trying breaches of

these regulations would be required. Now all these elements of government and administration exist already and have worked successfully in the international organization applied to the Danube. If precisely the same system were extended to the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, the settlement would entail no introduction of a new and untried element, but only the extension and development of the existing features of the Danube Commission. The series of treaties signed between 1856 and 1883 set up the Commission as an international executive, and gave it a written constitution under international guarantee. Acting within the limits of that constitution the Executive has, like all modern executives, legislative power to make regulations for certain defined purposes, the power of appointing and dismissing subordinate administrative officers, and the power of levying taxes. When a simple judicial system is superimposed, the whole edifice

of government necessary for a small area like the Danube or Bosphorus is complete. And there is reason to believe that what has succeeded upon the Danube will be no less successful upon the Bosphorus.

I have said that in order to apply the Danube system to Constantinople it would require an extension and development. This is because an international commission for the government of the latter would include within its jurisdiction a large and famous city. I propose now to examine in some detail the form which that extension would have to take. As in the case of the Danube, so in that of Constantinople, the nations would in a treaty agree to set up for a defined area an international administration in the form of a Commission under international guarantee. We have seen reason for believing that the success of the Danube experiment was due to the fact that the form of organ gave full expression to the idea of inter-

nationalism, the Commission being composed of a majority of representatives of nations which had no direct or acute political interests in the Danubian territories. This principle is a *sine qua non* of success for Constantinople. An international Commission, for example, composed of representatives of Russia, Germany, Roumania, and Bulgaria, would be foredoomed to failure, and so would any other which was intended to set up a joint control by Powers whose political interests in Constantinople are believed to be acute. An international Commission for the Straits would have to be a reasonably small body representing States of which a substantial majority had no direct political interests in the Near East. It might, for instance, consist of representatives of Russia, Germany, Roumania, the United States, Denmark, Holland, and Switzerland, or, perhaps still better, merely of the United States, Denmark, and Switzerland. This

method assumes that the members of the Commission shall represent and be appointed by the several States named, but it is to be observed that there is an alternative method. The Treaty might provide that the members of the Commission should consist of three members who were subjects of, say, the United States, Denmark, and Switzerland respectively. The three States would each nominate five of their subjects for election, and the signatory Powers would elect from these fifteen nominated persons the three members of the Commission, provided that not more than one elected member should be a subject of any one State. The three elected members, an American, a Dane, and a Swiss, would then be appointed for a fixed term of years by the signatory Powers themselves and not by the individual States. They would be removable only at the instance of the State which had nominated them

and by the decision of a conference representing the signatory Powers.

The treaty having provided for the election or appointment of the members of the Commission, would then proceed to give it a written constitution. The powers of the Commission, as an Executive, to make regulations for freedom of communication, law, order, police, sanitation, to appoint and dismiss subordinate officers, would be defined. The model would be the clauses which define the similar powers entrusted to the Danube Commission, but they would naturally have to be altered in detail to conform with the conditions in the Straits. And there is no reason why these powers should not be combined with a large measure of local government in Constantinople. The Commission would be an Executive appointed by an International Conference representing the nations of the world. The higher Executive in a country

like Britain is appointed by the Prime Minister, who is himself appointed by the Crown under pressure (usually) from the House of Commons. The existence of the British Executive, which comes into being in this singular way, is not in practice incompatible with a large measure of local government. The system works because the sphere and functions both of the Executive and of the organs of local government are respectively and constitutionally limited and defined. So, too, the treaty which guarantees an International Constitution for the Straits might limit and define the spheres and functions respectively of the International Commission and, say, an elected Municipal Council for Constantinople. Or, if an elected Municipal Council side by side with the International Commission were considered to be a risky experiment in the first years of the new regime, another method of providing for a measure of representative govern-

ment in the area may be suggested. The municipal government of the town of Constantinople might be entrusted to a Council consisting of the members of the International Commission and a certain number of elected and (or) nominated members who belonged to the native population. Such a form of government is, of course, a transitional stage between representative and non-representative local government, and has been greatly developed often with success in our own Crown Colonies. In some of these Colonies supreme Executive and Legislative Councils have been established, consisting partly of British Executive officers appointed by the Crown and partly of nominated or elected native members. And again the Municipal Council of a city like Colombo is formed of a mixture of ex-officio members drawn from the British Executive and of elected native members. The model for the government of the international area of the Straits,

at least in its first years, might well be that of our Crown Colonies, and in that case it is worth considering whether one member of the International Commission itself should not represent or even be elected by the native population.

The International Commission of the Straits would require a more elaborate judicial system than has been found necessary on the Danube. The Danube Commission's administration is confined to the river itself and to its police and navigation. The administration of the Straits would include a populous town. On the Danube judicial powers are conferred upon an officer appointed by the Commission, and the Commission itself is a court of appeal. In Constantinople regular criminal and municipal courts would be required for trying cases of breach of regulations and other offences. The establishment of these courts must be provided for in the Treaty, together

with the appointment of the judges and magistrates and the scale of their salaries.[1] The appointment of the judicial officers would naturally, as in this country, be in the hands of the executive. Lastly, courts for the trial of civil cases would have to be provided. The question of the law to be administered in these civil courts may at first sight present a difficulty; but here, again, the history of our own Crown Colonies indicates an easy and practical solution. In taking over territory in Asia and Africa, whether previously under native administration or the administration of some other European Power, we have frequently provided in the Constitution of our new Colony that the existing civil law shall continue to be administered in the civil courts set up

[1] There is a precedent for this in the elaborated provisions of the International Treaties which provide for the appointment and scale of salaries of the officers of the International Sanitary Councils.

by us. Thus it is that in Ceylon the decisions of judges in civil cases are still governed by Roman-Dutch, native Kandyan, and Mahommedan law. The same system should be applied to the territory of the Straits. The treaty, in providing for the continuance or establishment of civil courts and judges, will lay it down that the existing civil law of the territory internationalized shall continue to govern the decisions of those courts; and if subsequent experience shows that modification of the law and new legislation is required, then an addition to the international constitution should be made in the form of a Legislative Council, modelled upon such Councils which have existed for many years in India and our Crown Colonies.

This brief sketch of a possible international constitution for the government of the Straits and Constantinople will have shown that the idea is not utopian. It would not even have the merit or defect

of novelty. The Commission on the Bosphorus would, as I have said, contain no element or prerogative which has not been already given to the Commission on the Danube. If it were decided to set it up in the simplest form suggested in the previous pages, it would be an exact, if elaborated and enlarged, reproduction of the Danube Commission. On the other hand, if the suggestions for combining it with local self-government in a Municipal Council and a Legislative Council and with local representation on the Commission itself were adopted, the result would only be a natural development of a type of international government which has now had a history of sixty years of solid success.

CHAPTER II

STRATEGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

So far I have been considering the future of Constantinople only in times of peace, and I have attempted to show that in such times the interests of all nations would be protected and furthered by the Straits being placed under international administration, and that the constitution of an International Commission for that purpose is not only desirable but practicable. The question which I have reserved for this chapter is whether in times of war the interests of the world and of the individual nations will best be protected and advanced by leaving the Straits in the exclusive possession of a single Power or by placing it under

international administration. In the remainder of the book I shall therefore be concerned with that dangerous and elusive subject, strategical considerations, a subject which has probably produced more false prophets and prophecies than any other dignified with the name of a science.

The ordinary man is encouraged to think that people who believe in the desirability and possibility of international government have a monopoly of utopianism. But any history book will show that the desires and ideals of militarists, imperialists, and extreme nationalists are much more fantastically impossible than those of the internationalist. History is strewn with the wreckage, not of international but of imperial and national utopias. The most striking difference between the imperialist's and the internationalist's ideal is that the world has allowed the former to attempt to put his

ideal into practice, while refusing even to give a trial to the ideal of the latter. The reason is not difficult to find. The glitter of pure romance is to most people far more attractive than the drab dullness of plain working facts. Ninety-nine persons will follow with breathless interest the ridiculous utopian ceremonies of the puppet court of a puppet twentieth-century king for one who will find anything to interest him in the solid and practical, but extremely dull, proceedings of a Borough Council. To most people, as the preceding pages will prove to them, the functions and work of an European Commission of the Danube are portentously boring: that is because they embody an extremely practical ideal. The man who wants romance and excitement knows that the surest way of getting what he wants is to call all such practical ideals utopian, and he has dealt in this way very successfully with internationalism. Mean-

while diplomatists, kaisers, war-lords, and every kind of nationalist and imperialist have been given carte blanche by the millions of plain men and women to construct, out of their bodies and lives, systems based upon nothing but the dreams and hallucinations and deliriums of a madhouse. There were two great international reconstructions of Europe in the nineteenth century, one through the Treaty of Vienna in 1815 and the other through the Treaty of Berlin in 1878. Both of them embodied the ideas and desires of military men and imperialistic nationalists, and both of them fell to pieces almost instantly like card houses. They were, in fact, nothing but the utopias of practical men, and they have suffered the fate of all utopias. The long-suffering credulity of the ordinary man is one of the most astonishing phenomena in history. Louis XIV, Napoleon, Metternich, and Bismarck, to take only four

examples at random, were all allowed to use hundreds of thousands of ordinary men for the purpose of putting their ideals into practice. And each time the ordinary men said to themselves (and still say): "These be Great Men, Practical Men. They see Things As They Are. They show us the way to Reality and Realpolitik!" Yet a few years sufficed to prove Louis XIV a visionary, Metternich an impossible crank, and Napoleon a dreamer of unattainable dreams, while the moment in this war seems to be rapidly drawing near when the little reality in the Realpolitik of Bismarck will become apparent.

If Constantinople is settled by placing it in the hands of one State or nation, it will be settled solely on imperialist and militarist lines. No nation has a shadow of a national claim to it. In peace, as I have shown, no nation could have a shadow of an economic claim to it, if

it were placed under an International Commission. The only claims which remain are imperialistic and strategic. If we are to give the Straits to any one nation, we must do so simply because we consider that that nation ought to possess the power in and for war which the Straits confer upon their possessor. The question is therefore solely one of an increase or decrease of power for offence and defence which the geographical position of Constantinople entails. And it is these considerations, imperialist and strategic, one must repeat, which have always so far been allowed to dominate Europe's attempts to settle the problem of Constantinople. It has always formed the centre of some man's or some nation's strategic dream: and a dream does not cease to be a dream because it is strategic. When Napoleon in 1807 was concocting with the Emperor Alexander in the Treaty of Tilsit the foundations of

Europe as he conceived and desired them —in eight years practically every vestige of them had been swept off the face of the earth!—he is said to have exclaimed: "Constantinople! That means the rule of the world." Nothing could show more clearly than this historical and hysterical exclamation the fantastic, utopian hallucinations of the strategic imperialist with regard to the Straits. Constantinople has been in existence and in the hands of a single Power for the last 450 years at least. It has never yet given the rule of the world to any one. For the last two and a half years it has been in the hands of the strongest military Power in the world, during a war in which, we are told, that Power is deliberately seeking the rule of the world. But we know already that the only thing which Germany is going to get out of this war is, not the rule of the world, but some five or six million casualties. And yet

an American professor can still, with these facts staring him in the face, write in 1916: "Nothing has happened since to discredit this judgment" of Napoleon. Nothing ever will discredit the utopias of epileptic conquerors and other heroes until professors and other ordinary men begin to examine them in the cold light of facts.

That cold light of facts—in other words, the whole of history—shows that Constantinople is not the key to the rule of the world. It is not even a key to Asia or Egypt. It is a most important point on the line of communications *by land* between Europe and Asia, or certain parts of Asia. It can be used as a rather distant base of operations against Egypt. It is also the key to the Black Sea, and can therefore be used to open or close the communications of Roumania and the South of Russia by sea with the outside world. It is this last fact which

overshadows all other strategical considerations in the settlement of the Straits, and which we must now consider.

The question as to who holds the Straits in time of war is of very great importance to Roumania and Russia, of much greater importance than to any other European nation. But it is not of vital importance. The whole of history shows this. Neither of these States has ever held Constantinople: both have steadily increased in power during their existence. Both have been engaged in wars in which Constantinople has been held against them by their enemies, and from which their enemies have emerged defeated, and in this case history seems to be about to repeat itself in the present war.

If we are to be guided by facts rather than dreams, we must say that the future of Constantinople for strategic considerations concerns these two States more deeply than any other. The claim of

either to possess the Straits is based purely upon strategy. The Russian case is that Constantinople is of such immense strategic importance to her, can be used offensively with such force against her, that she cannot allow any other single State to remain in possession of it. Roumania can with justice make the same claim, but, having less power to back it with, remains inaudible to practical politicians, and therefore, as far as practical politics go, we need only concern ourselves with the Russian case. That case, as it is presented to the world, is based upon *defensive* strategy. The basis of the defensive claim must be admitted by every internationalist. If Constantinople is to be settled, Russia is justified in demanding that it shall not be placed in the power of any State which can use it with overwhelming offensive effect against her in war.

It will be seen that for defensive and

non-aggressive purposes, Russia's interests in Constantinople are precisely the same in war and in peace. For national defence all that she requires strategically in the Straits is that they shall be kept open for commerce and shipping.[1] The question, therefore, is whether if the Straits are internationalized and administered by an International Commission, she can be given reasonable assurance and guarantee that freedom of navigation in the Straits will be maintained in time of war. If an adequate assurance can be given, Russia's interests both in war and peace will be sufficiently safeguarded by the internationalization of Constantinople; if not, then her claim to exclusive possession receives more justification. We must therefore consider what would be the position of the Straits, administered by an

[1] For the question of the right of ships of war to pass through the Straits, see the Note at the end of this book.

International Commission, if war broke out between Russia and another Power.

Any idea of a permanent armed international occupation of the Straits is illusory. The treaty which sets up the International Commission must definitely provide for the neutralization and disarmament of the territory to be administered. All fortifications must be demolished, and the Commission will be authorized to raise only a police force sufficient to maintain order in times of peace. A very little reflection will show that this is essential. If the Commission itself were made responsible for defending its neutrality by armed force, it would have to raise and maintain a very considerable army. Those armed forces would necessarily be cosmopolitan, and a cosmopolitan army, permanently settled at Constantinople under the orders of an International Commission, would be a dangerous weapon, particularly for the Commission itself. We can have

no assurance that war will not break out between Russia and some State whose subjects furnish a substantial contingent to the army of the Commission. In that case the Commission will find itself balanced on the edge of an exceedingly sharp razor, and the chances of its being able to maintain its neutrality will be very small. A mixed international force of this kind would be the worst possible guarantee for Russia. These considerations have led Mr. Arnold Toynbee and others to propose that administration and defence of the Straits should be handed over, not to an International Commission, but to the United States. I confess that it seems to me improbable that the people and Government of the United States would agree to receive this very doubtful gift. Further, all the objections to the exclusive occupation of the Straits by a single Power exist, though of course in a very modified form, even

if that Power be America. International complications between Russia and the United States cannot be said to be impossible, and if they occurred their danger would be increased tenfold by the latter's presence at Constantinople. It must, however, be admitted that if the United States were willing to undertake the task, Russia's strategical requirements would, humanly speaking, be secured by America undertaking the defence of the neutrality of the Straits. In that case the administration of the International Commission might be set up as outlined in the previous chapter, while the armed force necessary for its defence and all defensive measures would be placed in the hands exclusively of the United States and her representative on the Commission.

But such a solution is only necessary if Russia cannot be given a sufficient guarantee by some other means. And there is reason for believing that she

could be given a reasonable probability of security by the establishment of an International Commission and the disarmament and complete neutralization of the Straits. In that case the Powers which signed the treaty would bind themselves severally and collectively to keep the Straits open to commerce and shipping under all circumstances, whether in war or in peace, and immediately to take common action, by armed force or otherwise, against any State which attempted to violate the neutrality of the Straits. This, it will be seen, is the kind of guarantee, backed by collective international force, of international public right which Mr. Asquith, Mr. Lloyd George, Viscount Grey, President Wilson, M. Briand, and the German Chancellor all agree it is essential to establish after this war if a new system of international relationship, founded upon law and order rather than on aggression, is to be

created. In such a League of Nations, pledged to use its armed forces against aggression, we have a new system, and a kind of guarantee which has never yet been tried in the relations of States. It is, of course, therefore open to any one, and to any nation, to assert that the system is utopian and the guarantee valueless. But it is not open to any one who believes and asserts that we are fighting this war in order to establish in the world a system of public right and international law under international guarantee, to turn round whenever any proposal is made for its establishment in a particular case, and cry aloud: "This is all dreams and utopias and chimeras and delusions. There is only one thing in the world, and that is individual force." Either we are or we are not after this war honestly going to attempt to found international relations upon a basis of public right, backed by an inter-

national guarantee. And if we are not, then let us say so honestly, and confess that, however the war may end upon the field of battle, we have been conquered by Prussian militarism.

Constantinople is a test case of the success of the Allies' aims in the war. If it be settled imperialistically and strategically by being given into the hands of a single Power, that means that, despite all the diplomatic arguments and ornaments with which the transaction will be covered, the same system of armed aggression and imperialism is to rule after the war as before it. If we, her Allies, and America admit that Russia cannot be expected to put any trust in the guarantee of ourselves and the United States, then nothing can alter the fact that the Entente has gained none of the objects for which we entered the war. But, as a matter of fact, if the International Commission were established and the guarantee of a

League of Nations, including America, were given, there is every reason for believing that Russia would have a reasonable probability of security. She would have that probability because she and her possible opponent would know that a violation of the Straits with a view of attacking Russia would involve a repetition of the experience, on a more hopeless scale, through which the Central Powers are now struggling to disaster. One prophecy as to the result of this war can be made with absolute assurance, and that is that in future even the most military of militarists and the most Prussian of diplomatists will hesitate a very long time before he violates a neutrality guaranteed by all the great military Powers of the world, or begins to tear up scraps of paper upon which are the signatures of those Powers.

I have throughout used the words "reasonable probability" with regard to

the amount or degree of security which Russia is justified in demanding. It is the easiest thing in the world in discussion of international or national policy to exaggerate or belittle, according as it suits one's case, man's power of providing against the future. Every policy must depend upon a nice balancing of future probabilities. My aim has been not to exaggerate in either direction. Now it would be an exaggeration to pretend, though quite easy to argue, that an International Commission under an international guarantee would give Russia a certainty of strategic security. In fact, it would give her nothing of the sort. The neutralized and disarmed Straits would undoubtedly at any time be at the mercy of a sudden raid by any State determined upon violating its neutrality. Russia's guarantee would consist in the knowledge of an aggressive State that such an action would entail fighting and

holding the Straits against the rest of the world. That guarantee, I maintain, gives Russia a "reasonable probability" of strategic security. Nothing can give Russia or any other country an absolute security strategically. The question is always one of probabilities. Even if Russia is established at the Straits, she has no certainty of security. This is clearly shown by the very people who would argue that she can only be secured by possessing Constantinople. For having placed her in imagination in exclusive control of the Straits, they then see that of course there is no certainty that she will remain there in war. She has no access by land to Constantinople, and her tenure of it would be precarious if she ever again found herself at war with, say, Germany, Austria, and Bulgaria. In order to be certain of holding the Straits she must also hold, it is argued, the whole of Thrace and Adrianople, and at least

a "corridor" which will allow her open communication with her new possession by land. And thus the vicious circle of strategic security widens itself indefinitely. The holding of Constantinople is a strategic necessity if you are to be certain of security. Very well, you hold Constantinople: and then immediately you find that the holding of some other place has become a strategic necessity to the holding of Constantinople. The only logical and possible issue for a policy based upon strategy is a world empire, for no General Staff will ever feel itself strategically secure so long as another General Staff holds a bare acre of ground which is "capable of being used as a base for hostile operations."

Absolute certainty as to the future is impossible, whether in the affairs of nations or individuals. No nation can or should demand, therefore, a guarantee of this nature. All that it can rightly

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demand is a guarantee and assurance giving it a high probability of security. That is precisely what the internationlization and neutralization of the Straits under an International Commission assure to Russia, provided that all the Great and Small Powers of the world bind themselves severally and collectively to take common action against any attempt to interfere with freedom of navigation in the Straits.

So far I have been considering the strategic future of Constantinople solely from the point of view of Russia. But though Russian interests are most conspicuously and deeply involved, the interests of other nations, including Great Britain, will also be gravely affected by a new settlement of the Straits. In the previous pages the possession of the Straits by Russia has been discussed with regard to the strategy of her national defence. That is because no

nation can expect the world to consider any claim on strategic grounds which is based upon offence or aggression, but only such as are based upon the requirements of national defence. But if Constantinople can be used for the purposes of offence against Russia, it can also be used offensively by her. The strategic position of a country like Roumania, with the Straits in the hands of Russia or any other single State, has already been indicated. For the greater part of the nineteenth century our foreign policy was largely dictated by a fear of the consequences of a Russian occupation of the Straits. The fear was based upon the possibilities of offensive and aggressive action against our Empire which the possession of Constantinople would give to Russia. It was certainly an exaggerated fear, which begot a wrong-headed policy for which we have paid dearly in this war: but it was clearly

not entirely groundless. Constantinople, backed by modern armies and armaments, would give any State a dominating military position in the Balkans and Asia Minor. Those persons who argue with Napoleon and the American professor that Constantinople means the rule of the world, can hardly argue that it contains no elements of danger, if backed by the resources of the Russian Empire, for, let us say, Egypt. And the argument that our alliance with Russia guarantees us against her misuse of Constantinople in the future is a dangerous one for those who use it. Our history books give no encouragement to the belief in the permanence of alliances which have their roots in war. Moreover, those who argue thus have to take up a very curious position. They have to maintain that a solemn guarantee, reduced to writing in a treaty in which Russia's allies and America bind themselves to maintain the neutrality of the

Straits and freedom of navigation, is valueless to Russia, but the future and unguaranteed benevolence of Russia towards her allies is a complete guarantee of their "vital interests" for them.

For the interests of the British Empire, which are essentially defensive, the presence of any strong military Power at Constantinople must always be undesirable. And here once more we get down to the bedrock of the strategic position of the Straits. If the policy of all nations is unaggressive and defensive, then all the strategic interests of all the nations in Constantinople are the same, namely, that it shall be in the hands of no single Power, and that it shall be open to navigation and shipping at all times, whether in war or in peace. The establishment and maintenance in war and in peace of international administration and freedom of navigation are the only policy which for each and every nation guarantees

those interests. This is instantly apparent in our own case. The internationalization of the Straits not only guarantees us against Russian aggression, but against the aggression of all other nations in the Near East. It would be, for instance, far the most effectual barrier against a Mittel-Europa as an aggressive idea or a road to the East for German military aggression. At the same time it sets up no barrier against those perfectly justifiable demands of the nations of Central and Eastern Europe for a road to the East, not for military aggression, but for free economic communication and development. Thus every nation is protected from aggression so long as Constantinople and the Straits remain neutralized in the hands of an international organ of government: half the world must always be in fear of aggression if it be in the hands of any single State. Once more we see that for Europe and America Constanti-

nople is the test of the Great War's result. If it can be, and is, given to any one State, it means the rule of the world by war; if in the hands of an International Commission it be administered by all for all, Constantinople means the rule of the world by peace.

NOTE ON FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION FOR SHIPS OF WAR IN THE STRAITS

I HAVE not complicated the argument in the preceding pages by discussing the question of freedom of navigation for ships of war. Ever since 1856 Russia has chafed at the restriction imposed upon her by treaty, which prevented her from sending her warships through the Straits. The restriction was imposed and maintained largely through British diplomacy. I have assumed that the restriction would not be maintained under an international Commission, and that the Straits would be opened alike to ships of war and ships of peace. Two remarks may be added. Before the war *all* the claims of Russia advanced by her diplomatists would have been conceded by this provision. Mr. Brailsford, who deals with this subject in a book, *The League of Nations*, which has been published since the preceding pages were written, writes: "M. Isvolsky, for example, wished to open the question (of the Straits) during the Bosnian crisis (1909–1910), and at that time Russia would hardly have

claimed more than the right to send her warships through the Straits."

The neutralization and internationalization of the Straits, combined with a provision that they should be completely free to the navigation of all ships, including warships, has a precedent in the Suez Canal. The Suez Canal Convention, which was signed in 1888 but was not made operative until the Anglo-French agreement was concluded in 1904, stipulates that—

"*Article* I.—The Suez Maritime Canal shall always be free and open, in time of war as in time of peace, to every vessel of commerce or of war, without distinction of flag.

"Consequently, the High Contracting Parties agree not in any way to interfere with the free use of the Canal, in time of war as in time of peace.

"The Canal shall never be subjected to the exercise of the right of blockade."

The Treaty then goes on to lay down the most elaborate stipulations whereby the neutralization of the Canal is to be ensured.

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